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& THE YELLOW BOOK.

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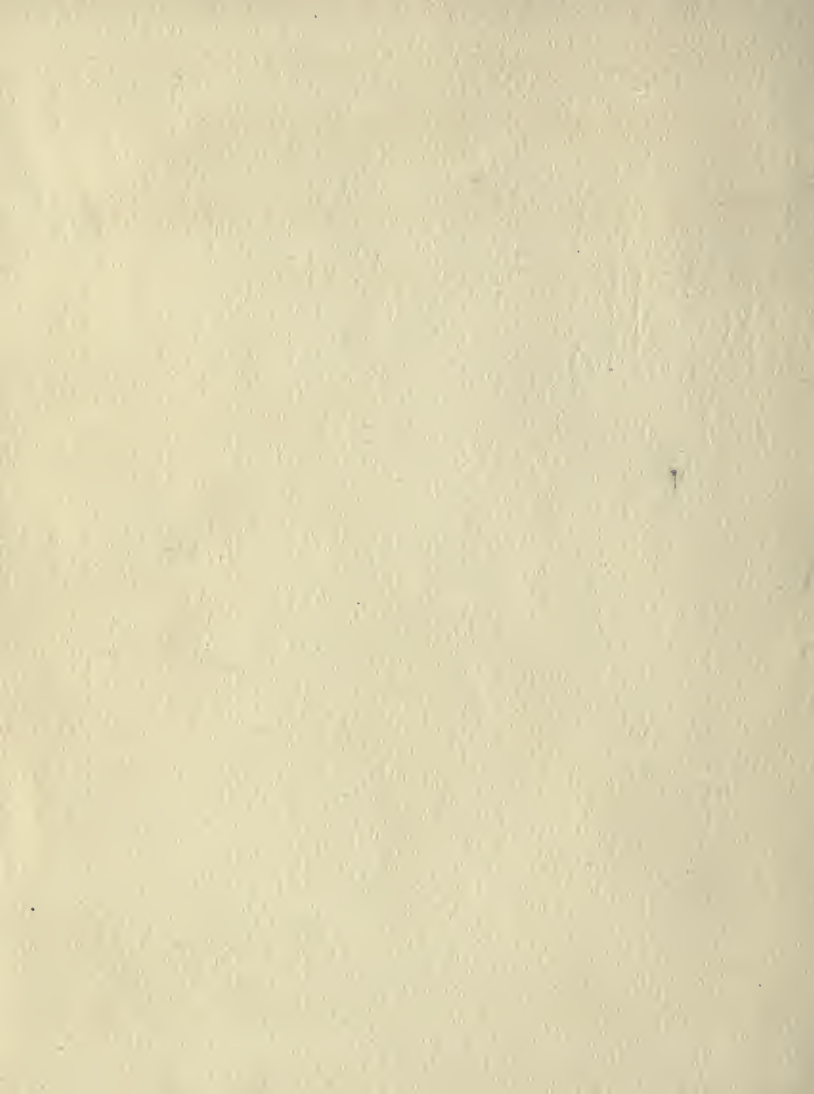
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AUBREY BEARDSLEY & THE YELLOW BOOK



JOHN LANE 1903
LONDON & NEW YORK

AUBREY BEARDSLEY & THE YELLOW BOOK

UNTIL the publication of the first volume of "The Yellow Book" in April 1894, Aubrey Beardsley was practically unknown, although he had made some drawings for "Le Morte d'Arthur," and had completed the remarkable designs illustrating "Salome." This was his artistic record, when one morning he, with Mr. Henry Harland and myself, during half an hour's chat over our cigarettes at the Hogarth Club, founded the much discussed "Yellow Book." Beardsley became Art Editor, whilst Mr. Harland, as all the world knows, was Literary Editor.

We all remember the sensation caused by the appearance of the first volume. Perhaps the *Times* and the *Westminster Gazette* were the most savage in their strictures, on the art at any rate.

AUBREY BEARDSLEY AND

The *Westminster Gazette* said :

“Mr Aubrey Beardsley achieves excesses hitherto undreamt of. He seems to have conceived the disagreeable idea of taking certain arrangements of lines invented by the Japanese, and specially suited to blithe and pleasant freaks of decoration, and applying them to the most morbid of grotesques. His offence is the less to be condoned because he has undoubted skill as a line draughtsman and has shown himself capable of refined and delicate work. But as regards certain of his inventions in this number, the thing called ‘The Sentimental Education,’ and that other thing to which the name of Mrs. Patrick Campbell has somehow become attached, we do not know that anything would meet the case except a short Act of Parliament to make this kind of thing illegal.”

The *Times* said :

“‘The Yellow Book’ is, we suppose, destined to be the organ of the New Literature and the New Art. If the New Art is represented by the cover of this wonderful volume, it is scarcely calculated to attract by its intrinsic beauty or merit ; possibly, however, it may be intended to attract by its very repulsiveness and insolence, and in that case it is not unlikely to be successful. Its note appears to be a combination of English rowdyism with

THE YELLOW BOOK

French lubricity. . . . Sir Frederic Leighton, who contributes two graceful studies, finds himself cheek by jowl with such advanced and riotous representatives of the New Art as Mr. Aubrey Beardsley and Mr. Walter Sickert. On the whole the New Art and the New Literature appear to us to compare in this singular volume far from favourably with the old."

It may interest the *Times* critic to know that Sir Frederic Leighton was a great admirer of Beardsley's work. At one of Sir Frederic's periodical visits to the Bodley Head to see how the New Art and the New Literature were developing, he playfully suggested that if he was not "performing an R.A. duty he was doing a neighbourly one." He asked to see the originals of Beardsley's "Yellow Book" pictures (Vol. I.) and then remarked: "Ah! what wonderful line! What a great artist!" and then *sotto voce*, "if he could only draw!" My retort was, "Sir Frederic, I am tired of seeing the work of men who can *only* draw." "Oh! yes," said Sir Frederic, "I know what you mean, and you are quite right too."

There was, indeed, a universal howl against the

AUBREY BEARDSLEY AND

cover and title-page designs, but of course the conductors of "The Yellow Book" were nothing daunted, and refused to climb down from the position they had assumed.

When the second volume was announced, it was stated that with each volume there would be new cover and title-page designs; this was strictly adhered to, but strange though it may appear, from that time onwards nearly every illustrated magazine in Europe and America became our imitators by adopting the plan of a new cover design for each number. Indeed, "The Yellow Book" was always on the side of reform.

Perhaps the most original literary contribution to "The Yellow Book," one which did not fulfil its object however, was a criticism in the second volume, by the late P. G. Hamerton, of the contents of Volume I. Mr. Hamerton, being merely an art critic and not a humorist, did not fulfil the commission quite in the spirit in which it was given him; the conductors of the quarterly desired criticism, even though adverse to themselves. I am sure that nothing would have delighted the

THE YELLOW BOOK

two editors more than a good slating in their own pages, if done with a humorous touch, but Mr. Hamerton, always conscientious, found nothing but praise for its contents, especially for Beardsley's work.

It is a noteworthy fact that many of the most distinguished authors of the younger generation graduated from the pages of "The Yellow Book": Mr. Kenneth Grahame, Mr. Max Beerbohm, Mr. F. B. Money-Coutts, Miss Ella d'Arcy, Miss Evelyn Sharp, and Miss Netta Syrett. Notable among the exceptions is Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton, whose whimsical genius would have been at home in its pages, whilst others, all very distinguished, gave it their best; for instance, Mr. William Watson, "Hymn to the Sea"; Mr. Henry James, "The Death of the Lion"; Mr. John Davidson, "The Ballad of a Nun"; to say nothing of the editor's own work. Mr. Harland had the faculty of getting the best from his contributors.

Beardsley's defect as art editor was youth. He would not take himself seriously; as an editor and draughtsman he was almost a practical joker, for

AUBREY BEARDSLEY AND

one had, so to speak, to place his drawings under a microscope, and look at them upside down. This tendency, on the eve of the production of Volume V., during my first visit to the United States, rendered it necessary to omit his work from that volume.

Beardsley was responsible for the art of the first four volumes, and it must frankly be confessed that, when he severed his connection with the magazine, the quarterly suffered an irretrievable loss.

Soon after this period, Mr. Beardsley and Mr. Arthur Symons started "The Savoy" as a rival, to which Beardsley contributed another fine series of drawings; but "The Yellow Book" outlived "The Savoy," and indeed its high level of literary excellence was always maintained, whilst the art reproductions were as distinguished as anything in the previous volumes, although the absence of Beardsley's designs was an irreparable loss.

I well remember being interviewed in New York regarding the alleged decadence in Beardsley's work. I said then, and repeat now, that he merely

THE YELLOW BOOK

lashed the follies of his time, that he was the Hogarth of his day, and that he had no more sympathy with decadence than Hogarth had for the vices depicted in "The Rake's Progress" and "Marriage à la Mode." Knowledge must never be confounded with sympathy. I will go farther, and declare that Beardsley, by his grotesque and powerful pictures of several hideous phases of life, dealt a death blow to decadence. Had he lived till now, it is quite possible that the Royal Academy might have justified its existence by recognising in him the greatest exponent of the most vital of the graphic arts, namely, Black and White. In support of this theory, it may be as well to point out that Mr. Harland is now the delight of millions by his charming love romances, and that "Max" in his brilliant weekly articles in the *Saturday Review* pleads eloquently for an intelligent drama, whilst the Bodley Head publishes practical books on gardening, and a series dealing with country delights.

Beardsley wrote very few letters to the newspapers, but here are two :

AUBREY BEARDSLEY AND

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE PALL MALL
BUDGET.*

SIR,—So much exception has been taken, both by the press and by private persons, to my title-page of “The Yellow Book,” that I must plead for space in your valuable paper to enlighten those who profess to find my picture unintelligible. It represents a lady playing the piano in the middle of a field. Unpardonable affectation ! cry the critics. But let us listen to Bomvet : “Christopher Willibald Ritter von Glück, in order to warm his imagination and to transport himself to Aulis or Sparta, was accustomed to place himself in the middle of a field. In this situation with his piano before him, and a bottle of champagne on each side, he wrote in the open air his two ‘Iphigenias,’ his ‘Orpheus,’ and some other works.” I tremble to think what critics would say had I introduced these bottles of champagne. And yet we do not call Glück a decadent.

Yours obediently,

AUBREY BEARDSLEY.

“The Bodley Head,” Vigo Street, W.

April 27.

THE YELLOW BOOK

In reviewing Mr. John Davidson's "Plays" on March 1, 1894, the *Daily Chronicle* criticised the frontispiece in the following words :

"Mr. Beardsley has contributed a frontispiece *à propos* of 'Scaramouche in Naxos,' in which one or two well-known faces of the day are to be recognised—an error of taste which is to be regretted."

The next day's issue contained the following reply from Beardsley :

"AN ERROR OF TASTE"

SIR,—In your review of Mr. Davidson's plays I find myself convicted of an error of taste, for having introduced portraits into my frontispiece to that book. I cannot help feeling that your reviewer is unduly severe. One of the gentlemen who forms part of my decoration is surely beautiful enough to stand the test even of portraiture, the other owes me half a crown.

I am, yours truly,
AUBREY BEARDSLEY.

114 Cambridge Street, S.W.

March 1, 1894.

AUBREY BEARDSLEY AND

The subjects of Beardsley's two portraits were Mr. Wilde and Sir Augustus Harris ; the latter Beardsley considered his debtor by virtue of his having taken half a crown at Covent Garden Theatre, without providing him with a seat !

Aubrey Beardsley was born on August 21, 1872, and died on March 16, 1898. During his short life he carried the art of Black and White further than any man since Albert Dürer. On his death, prophetic assurances were not wanting that the "Beardsley cult," or "craze," as it was generally called, was doomed to extinction with the death of its high priest, but so far from this anticipation being realised, his work now enjoys a greater appreciation and more intelligent sympathy than was granted to it, save by an esoteric few, during his lifetime. There are still to be seen artists who with the utmost assiduity endeavour to preserve the beauty of the Beardsley line, and generally follow in the artistic footsteps of their youthful master.

Although it is impossible, with any degree of accuracy, to state to what extent Beardsley's

THE YELLOW BOOK

popularity has increased during the last few years, evidences are not wanting to show that his following is as enthusiastic and loyal as in his heyday, when he worked for "The Yellow Book." This applies not only to Great Britain, but equally to America, whilst in Germany, France, Belgium, Russia, and Holland it is safe to affirm that his reputation is steadily growing, especially in Germany. The best means of judging this is the increasing demand for the volumes he illustrated. Indeed, it is obvious to the most superficial observer that there is hardly a Black and White artist working to-day who has not in some subtle way been influenced by the master.

In the following list it will be seen that several works are nearing exhaustion, in a few cases less than ten copies remain, and in several instances the prices have been raised. None of the works enumerated in the list will be reprinted in their original form.

More than three-fourths of Beardsley's work passed through my hands, and to my knowledge he never used Chinese White. I am the fortunate

THE YELLOW BOOK

possessor of the originals of over eighty of his principal drawings. I get applications from would-be purchasers of these from different parts of the world almost daily, but as yet I have withstood all temptations to part with these treasures, which I regard as the chief monument of the greatest, most brilliant, the wittiest, and the most lovable man it has ever been my privilege to know.

JOHN LANE.

THE BODLEY HEAD,
VIGO STREET, LONDON, W.

UNDER THE HILL
AND OTHER ESSAYS IN PROSE & VERSE
INCLUDING TABLE TALK

BY AUBREY BEARDSLEY

With numerous Illustrations by the Author

Crown 4to. Price 7s. 6d. net

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* * *Also an edition printed upon Japanese
Vellum, limited to fifty copies for England
and America. Price 21s. net.*

THE increasing popularity of Aubrey Beardsley's volumes of drawings has prompted his publisher to re-issue his literary remains, if he may so style them. In this volume are gathered together his literary contributions in verse and prose to "The Savoy," his Table Talk, and two letters written to the press in reply to criticism, which are characteristic of the humorous courtesy with which Beardsley received adverse or scornful criticism, contenting himself with the weapons of courtesy and humour. There are also included in this volume several hitherto unpublished designs which are of great interest to all lovers of his work.

THE EARLY WORK OF AUBREY BEARDSLEY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY H. C. MARILLIER

Price 42s. net (originally published at 31s. 6d. net).

* * * *Also an Edition printed upon Japanese Vellum, limited to one hundred and twenty copies for England and America. Price 84s. net (originally published at 63s. net). Only six copies of this remain.*

THIS handsome volume was published soon after Beardsley's death. It contains most of his work up the time of his ceasing to be associated with the art editorship of "The Yellow Book," and includes the remarkable designs illustrating "Salome," long since out of print. These are considered by the critics as among the best and most individual work he did. There are in all upwards of 180 reproductions, in addition to two characteristic photographs of Beardsley, taken by Mr. Frederick H. Evans.



FRONTISPIECE TO
"VENUS AND TANNHÄUSER"

THE LATER WORK OF AUBREY BEARDSLEY

Demy 4to. Price 42s. net.

* * * *Also a Limited Edition of 120 copies
* * * for England and America, printed on
Japanese Vellum. 105s. net, originally
published at 84s. net.*

THIS collection was not published until nearly three years after Beardsley's death, and contains most of the designs not included in "The Early Work." The two volumes thus form an almost complete record of his artistic production. In all there are upwards of 170 reproductions, including 3 in colour and 11 in photogravure.

In the Japanese Vellum edition several illustrations are reproduced in photogravure, instead of half-tone as in the ordinary edition, whilst the frontispiece is hand-coloured.

Specimen Illustration (Reduced)



*BORDER-DESIGN
FROM "SALOME"*

A SECOND BOOK OF FIFTY DRAWINGS

BY AUBREY BEARDSLEY

Crown 4to. Price 10s. 6d. net

* * *This edition is limited to one thousand
* * copies of the ordinary issue, and fifty
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hausted on publication).*

THE First Book of Fifty Drawings, which preceded this volume, is now selling at a greatly enhanced price. The present volume is remarkable as containing several reproductions from very early sketches, as well as many executed in the artist's most individual style, among which is a photogravure of "Mademoiselle de Maupin," one design in colour, and three photogravures which show how strong, at one time, was the Burne-Jones influence upon Beardsley.

Specimen Illustration (Reduced)



AVBNEY & BRADLEY. 1876.

A CATALOGUE
COVER

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK. BY ALEXANDER POPE

With Nine Full-page Illustrations by AUBREY BEARDSLEY

Crown 4to. Price 10s. 6d. net

*** Very few copies remain of this volume,
which was originally published at
7s. 6d. net. The Japanese Vellum
Edition is exhausted.*

PERHAPS, with the exception of the series of drawings illustrating "Salome," no designs are more characteristic, more strikingly original, than those contained in "The Rape of the Lock." The edition is now rapidly nearing exhaustion and the publisher has decided not to re-issue it in the original form. This work with the original illustrations is included as Vol. IX. of "The Flowers of Parnassus." Demy 16mo ($5\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches). Bound in Cloth, Price 1s. net. Bound in Leather, Price 1s. 6d. net.

Specimen Illustration (Reduced)



*THE BATTLE OF THE
BEAUX AND THE BELLES*

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(Originally published at 7s. 6d. net)

* * *This edition is limited to three hundred
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A PECULIAR and pathetic interest attaches itself to this volume on account of the sad, even tragic end of Ernest Dowson. The obituary notices following his death were to many the first intimation of his existence, but to those who knew him there was little room for doubt that he possessed a genius which was as remarkable as it was ill-starred.

Specimen

Illustration



BEN IONSON, HIS VOL- PONE : OR THE FOX

A NEW EDITION, WITH A CRITICAL ESSAY
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And Illustrations by AUBREY BEARDSLEY

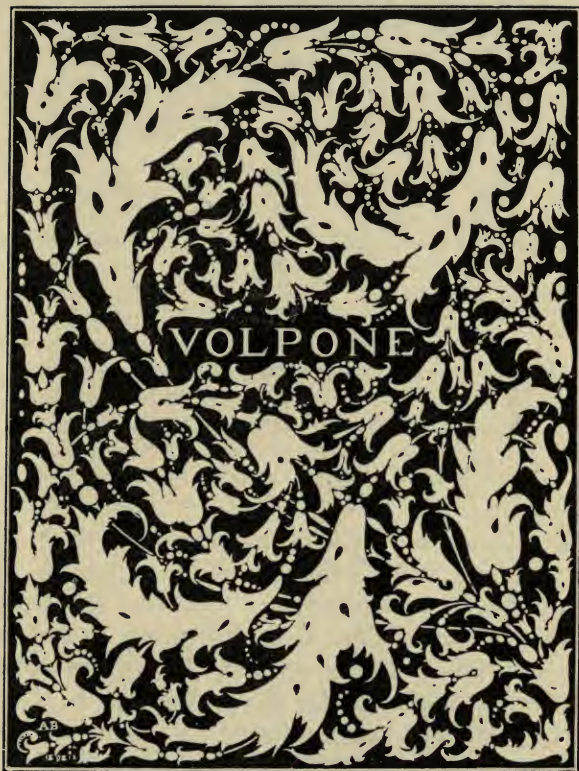
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* * * *The Ordinary Edition is limited to one
thousand copies. The Japanese Vellum
Edition, limited to one hundred copies,
is now out of print.*

MR. ROBERT ROSS in his eulogy con-
siders 1896 as Beardsley's *annus mirabilis*,
and remarks that it would be impossible
to believe he could have surpassed the work of
that year but for the illustrations to "Volpone."
They characterise in a very marked manner the
singular genius both in creative faculty and
draughtsmanship of the artist.

Specimen Illustration (Reduced)



*THE COVER
DESIGN*

THE YELLOW BOOK

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY

LITERARY EDITOR—HENRY HARLAND

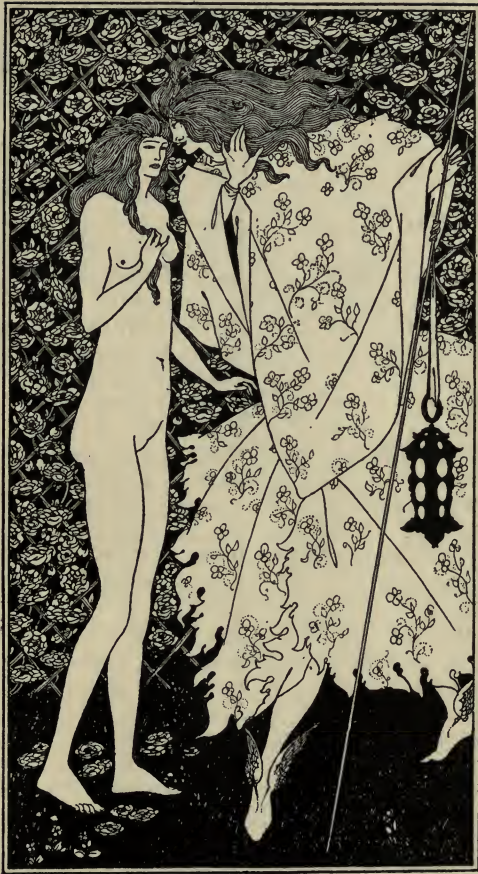
ART EDITOR (Vols. I. to IV.)—AUBREY BEARDSLEY

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I.	April 1894.	272 pp.	15 Illustrations. [<i>Out of print.</i>]
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IV.	January 1895.	285 pp.	16 Illustrations.
V.	April 1895.	317 pp.	14 Illustrations.
VI.	July 1895.	335 pp.	16 Illustrations.
VII.	October 1895.	320 pp.	20 Illustrations.
VIII.	January 1896.	406 pp.	26 Illustrations.
IX.	April 1896.	256 pp.	17 Illustrations.
X.	July 1896.	340 pp.	13 Illustrations.
XI.	October 1896.	342 pp.	13 Illustrations.
XII.	January 1897.	350 pp.	14 Illustrations.
XIII.	April 1897.	316 pp.	18 Illustrations.

IT was in his capacity as art-editor of "The Yellow Book" that Beardsley made his first claim to public notice. The earlier volumes contain twenty designs from his pencil, in addition to a number of others from the best known black and white artists of the day. Volume I. is now out of print, but the publisher has been fortunate in securing several second-hand copies which he supplies only with sets.

A List of the Contributors, both Literary and Artistic, will be found on pages 28 and 29



**THE MYSTERIOUS
ROSE-GARDEN**

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS TO THE YELLOW BOOK

LITERARY

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
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ART EDITOR—AUBREY BEARDSLEY

Crown 4to. Price 21s. net a Set

Vol. I. 274 pp. 43 Illustrations

Vol. II. 286 pp. 29 Illustrations

Vol. III. 280 pp. 30 Illustrations

AFTER ceasing to hold the post of art-editor of "The Yellow Book," Beardsley became associated in a similar capacity with "The Savoy," at the same time contributing the lion's share of the illustrations. In the three volumes that appeared he had to his credit forty-nine designs, in addition to a poem and a story entitled "Under the Hill." In addition to Beardsley's own work, "The Savoy" contains many notable contributions both literary and artistic.

*A List of the Contributors, both Literary and Artistic,
will be found on page 32.*



THE DEATH
OF PIERROT

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A TRAGIC FARCE ; SCARAMOUCH IN NAXOS.
A PANTOMIME

BY JOHN DAVIDSON

With Frontispiece and Cover-Design by AUBREY BEARDSLEY

Small 4to. Price 7s. 6d. net

* * *The Edition is limited to 500 copies*

THIS volume has a special interest, as Beardsley was induced by the *Daily Chronicle's* criticism of his illustration to "Scaramouch in Naxos," to write the letter mentioned on page 9 of this prospectus.



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